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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [KNUC](#) [IAEA](#) [JA](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: JAPAN TO SUPPORT SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN UNDER
UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION

REF: A. TOKYO 3201
[1](#)B. TOKYO 1884
[1](#)C. TOKYO 2473

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b), (c) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso during a June 22 interview with Reuters stated that Japan would take part if the international community imposed sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program. The report also noted that Aso had urged his Iranian counterpart to seriously consider the current package of incentives offered by the EU-3, Russia, China and the U.S. In follow up discussions with ESToff, MOFA desk officers confirmed the accuracy of the report and emphasized Japan's preference for Chapter VII sanctions based on a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution. Aso's comments also track with comments made in early May by Deputy Foreign Minister Nishida to DCM and in early April by MOFA Arms Control, Science and Non-Proliferation Bureau desk officers. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) ESToff contacted MOFA Second Middle East Affairs Division desk officer Kamada on June 23 to discuss comments concerning Iran by Foreign Minister Aso in a June 22 interview with Reuters. Kamada confirmed reports that Japan would support Chapter VII sanctions against Iran as long as the sanctions are based on a UNSC resolution. Japan has not yet decided whether it would support sanctions imposed by "like-minded countries" in the absence of UNSC action, according to Kamada. MOFA Deputy Director for Non-Proliferation, Science and Nuclear Energy Kenji Enoshita also confirmed the reporting, but told ESToff that, to the best of his knowledge, no formal decision had been made about possible sanctions menus.

[1](#)3. (C) In an April 6 meeting, MOFA Non-Proliferation, Science and Nuclear Energy Division Officer Teppei Kanda told ESToff that Tokyo was preparing for the possibility of some sort of sanctions being applied to Iran in the event it failed to comply with a UNSC Presidential Statement (reftel B). Pressed further on the types of sanctions the Japan envisioned in that event, Kanda said that internal Japanese discussions had yet to identify a concrete sanctions menu. At the time, Kanda acknowledged that sanctions targeting Iran's financial and petroleum sectors would have the most impact; he also pointed out that they would cause the most economic pain to Japan.

[1](#)4. (C) On May 8, DCM urged Deputy Foreign Minister Nishida to support Chapter VII sanctions against Iran as a potential next step in resolving the impasse (reftel C). Nishida agreed that Japan should use its bilateral relationship with

Iran to urge compliance but also pointed out that the international community must make a collective effort to find a resolution. A UNSC resolution that does not have the backing of Russia or China could encourage Iran to increase its rhetoric and its efforts to further split the international community's resolve. Nishida told DCM that Japan was conducting intergovernmental discussions on sanctions options and that the GOJ was ready to consult with the U.S. on possible next steps. Japan is not against economic sanctions, but any sanctions must be carefully articulated with regards to targets and participants in order for them to be truly effective.

15. (S) During early June meetings on Iran with Departments of State and Treasury officials, Japanese officials outlined the legal and economic hurdles Japan must clear in order to implement sanctions.

16. (S) COMMENT. Aso's comments are the first public statement by a senior Japanese official in favor of sanctions against Iran but substantively track with what our interlocutors have been saying since April: Japan will support sanctions under a UNSC resolution. Aso's public comments suggest Japan is prepared to begin discussions on possible sanctions menus with the United States and other UNSC partners. Although MOFA officials argue they are reluctant to support "like-minded" sanctions, a G-7 consensus on sanctions would allow Japan to implement sanctions. We assess that Japan could be persuaded that EU3 and U.S. support for sanctions would provide enough political cover for Japan to move ahead. END COMMENT.
SCHIEFFER